Red Tractor Logo Hits £10 Billion Mark

The Red Tractor logo now features on product with an annual retail sales value of £10 billion*, a rise of over £1.5bn in the last twelve months, reports Assured Food Standards (AFS) – the independent organisation behind the Red Tractor food assurance scheme. This milestone has been reached under the tenure of Colin Smith, Assured Food Standard’s outgoing Chairman, who took up the post in 2003.

Much of the growth has been driven by the foodservice sector, which has grown 50% in the last year. All major retailers and more than 500 leading companies use the logo and Red Tractor is now attracting a high level of interest from foodservice operators supplying the leisure sector as well as public procurement areas such as schools and hospitals, according to AFS.

“As little as two years ago we had no presence in foodservice so this is an important development for us,” says David Clarke, CEO of Assured Food Standards.

“The Red Tractor logo is a simple shorthand for consumers who want to know that the food they buy meets strict standards of food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare as well as a guarantee of origin.
For food businesses, Red Tractor reinforces their messaging to customers about the importance of assured quality, traceable food that helps to meet their due diligence requirements.”

The latest announcement coincides with the arrival of new, independent, AFS Chairman, David Gregory. His role commences on December 1st when Colin Smith will step down from the post at the completion of his successful six-year tenure.

The news also comes shortly after approval from Brussels of the plan by the levy board AHDB to consolidate activity behind the Red Tractor logo.

In a further step in the evolution of Red Tractor, Assured Food Standards is on the verge of launching its newly harmonised standards. From April 2010, the scheme’s 78,000 farmers and growers will go live with standards that are for the first time aligned across all farm sectors allowing a more integrated approach, particularly for mixed farms. The harmonised standards will ensure that the requirements that underpin the Red Tractor logo are consistent across all sectors. They will be delivered to all AFS members in January 2010.

David Gregory says: “It is an extremely exciting time to come on board. £10billion is a major achievement, equivalent to double the GDP of Bulgaria*** and almost ten times the sales of all DVDs in the UK. This figure is made only more impressive by the fact it has been achieved with minimum investment to date. AFS has done a fantastic job in getting the Red Tractor logo on pack and in restaurants and we are very much looking forward to driving this momentum by continuing to work in partnership with the industry to take the message out to a much wider audience, particularly the consumer.”

Latest members to join the Red Tractor scheme include leading facilities management and contract catering company, Sodexo, which has committed to using Red Tractor assured fruit and vegetables in 800 high profile outlets. Orchid, the fifth biggest managed pub group in the UK, is using Red Tractor to help drive the Sunday lunch occasion across its pubs and in public procurement. ISS Mediclean and its sister company ISS Caterhouse, are supplying Red Tractor assured meat to hospitals and primary schools. Red Tractor is used by all leading supermarket chains as well as brands such as Shredded Wheat, Country Life butter and McCain’s chips.
For further information please contact Caroline Lott or Tami Keefe at the Red Tractor press office on 0845 456 6424.

*AFS licensing data
** Harmonisation process sees all Red Tractor Standards being brought in line with one another to create a simpler proposition for the consumer and to integrate processes for farmers particularly in mixed farms. The Harmonisation of assurance schemes will be implemented on farm 1st April 2010
*** International Monetary Fund 2008 figures

Notes to Editors

1. Assured Food Standards (AFS) is the independent organisation set up to manage, develop and promote the Red Tractor as a mark of safe, quality, affordable food that the public can trust.

2. AFS is owned by all links in the UK food chain that produces our food, from farmers to retailers. This means that its ownership is shared by organisations such as the British Retail Consortium, Dairy UK, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, National Farmers Union (England and Wales) and Ulster Farmers Union. The Food and Drink Federation also provides valued input.

3. AFS is set up as an independent not-for-profit organisation to ensure that it can operate objectively in the interest of the consumer, without undue influence from any single organisation or link in the chain.

4. In addition to controlling the Red Tractor logo AFS manages farm assurance schemes in six production sectors including dairy, poultry, pigs, cattle & sheep, combinable crops and fresh produce.

5. Red Tractor is the leading quality kitemark for British food and drink and covers a wider range of products than any other mark. It is currently available on a wide range of food and drink including meat, vegetables, fruit, salads, milk, cheese, sugar, beer and flour and is about ensuring everybody can afford safe and good quality food on a daily basis.